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B-1Bs participate in Shaw ORE

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ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. (ACCNS) - B-1B crews from here simulated Soviet Tu-22 Backfires during the 20th Fighter Wing, Shaw AFB, S.C., Operational Readiness Exercise recently.

Two squadrons flew two sorties each, that consisted of a simulated attack on certain areas off the coast of North Carolina and at Shaw.

"We simulated aggressors (a foreign country's bomber)," said Lt. Col. Steve Huffman, 37th BS director of operations. "Their mission (F-16 pilots from Shaw) was to protect their home station from an attack."

The ORE served as a test for both units involved, said Huffman.

"It's an opportunity for us to get realistic air combat training, and obviously the folks at Shaw will do their best because it's their ORE," said Huffman. "They'll be graded on their performance, so it's motivation for them to give us their best."

"The big thing in helping is that we can match our capabilities against fourth generation (state-of-the-art) aircraft such as the F-16, Su-27 and MiG-29," said Huffman.

Participating in any ORE, especially another base's ORE, is a different experience, said Huffman.

"I have mixed emotions. You don't want to be too much of a target, but you want to give them a realistic look," said Huffman. "The ORE will give us a benchmark for improvement."

Maj. Rob Maness, 77th BS assistant operations officer, who participated in the operation, shares Huffman's opinion.

"I think it's a good opportunity for the F-16 pilots to go against high-tech bombers. For us, it's a good training to use our defensive tactics, which includes seeing how effective night missions are against fighters," said Maness.

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